177 have brought to their customs rather than truly adhere to them. This
183 passive attitude is due to an inveterate fatalism which makes them
563 bow before the undisputed master, the Mututsi, and also to the antiquity of custom which makes it as respectable as an almost divine institution.

671 As is the case in the Belgian Congo and generally in [5] Black Africa, the common law contains not only juridical rules applicable to persons, property, and society, it also contains religious and magic regulations, various recipes, etc. Such as it is, it forms a disparate yet solid whole which gives the solution to problems arising from the individual and collective life of the Banyarwanda.

671 The common law of Ruanda, applicable to a homogeneous
184 population, is the same everywhere, except in the north on the
563 frontier of Kivu and Uganda, where the authority of the Batutsi over the Bahutu could not assert itself as in the rest of the country. This independence has resulted in the substitution of the administration of the Bahutu clan and family chiefs for that of the Hamite officials.

114 Those who have known Ruanda and its people best are the members of the Society of Missionary Fathers of Africa. The Reverend Fathers Lupias, Schumacher, Arnoux, Pagès, and Hurel have published, in the Anthropos and Congo reviews (among others) and in numerous monographs, elaborate studies on different aspects of the social, political, religious, and intellectual life of the Banyarwanda. The territorial governors Lenaerts and Sandrart have also brought fruitful contributions to the knowledge of Ruanda common law.

121 Nevertheless, we do not believe that a more or less complete account of the customs of private and public law of Ruanda has ever been prepared. This is what we have modestly attempted to do in the
[125] present work by inserting observations gathered in a questionnaire set up especially to facilitate [6] the study of native law (1). We have

1. J. Vanhove, Questionnaire de Sociologie juridique, Brussels, printer Lesigne, 1939.

not been able to go into the details of all the institutions of which some, particularly those relative to cattle contracts, would alone require a whole volume.

● 124 But, in spite of the limited time we could devote to this account of the customs, we believe we have given the essential points

●124 of the complex customs of Ruanda. The value of our information,
[115] emanating from the principal abiru, guardians of the customs of the Court of Nyanza, and from the seminarists, sons of the great provincial chiefs, as well as the cross-checking we have done, make us hope that we will present an essay from which all fantasy has been eliminated.

121 We hope that it will be possible for all those, both clerical and lay, who work in the "country of the cow and the drum," as well as ethnologists needing a basis for research, to have a clear picture of an organization, of a mechanism both complicated and precise, that takes us back mutatis mutandis both to the atmosphere of the ancient City and to that of the medieval world. [7]

695 referred to simply as kushoko, "drinking." This fact indicates that the poison test was the oldest form. To give a person this test is called kushora which simply means "to give a drink." Thus they say: "Umututsi ashora inka ze (the Mututsi gives his cows a drink)," as well as "kushora ikihango (to drink poison)" and "kushora (literally, to drink a chicken)."

[286] Chapter 14

History and Chronology

173 Ruanda. I had great difficulty in obtaining data about the history of Ruanda. Oral tradition in the interlacustrine region is limited chiefly to the genealogy of the rulers. This basic skeleton is also generally supplemented by a few statements about the chief events of the corresponding epochs. My informants, however, knew little about the history of the dynasty, since most of them were Bahutu.

● 124 Musinga gave Captain W. Von Grawert, who introduced me to him, his royal promise that he would have reports made to me on the history of the country or even tell me about it himself. [187] The chicken oracle, however, said that the king would suffer harm if I were initiated in the history of the country. The next time I visited Musinga and tried to have certain contradictions in my notes on the Ruanda rulers cleared up by this authoritative source, I was kept dangling for two and a half hours and was unsuccessful. His Black Majesty was very pleasant, but during the whole time he kept practicing, in German, the meaningless sentence, "Little spear is pretty."

Musinga wanted to please me by demonstrating his zeal in learning the German language and in this way divert my attention from interviewing him.

173 [715] It seems that in Ruanda as well as In Nkole one may not speak about deceased kings with the uninitiated, for the spirits, disturbed in their rest, might avenge themselves. However, people [52] talk about olden times in the evening when the nobility gather with the king, pay court to him, and drink beer. They know

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for two years, from December 1949 to November 1951. During that period information was secured by continuous observation and by informal interviews with Africans and Europeans. Some administrative officers and missionaries, keenly interested in the society and culture of the Ruanda, have contributed much information and stimulating opinions.

In addition to this work, three systematic inquiries on specific subjects have been completed: political organization, kinship and family structures, and cosmological and ethical systems. Each of these inquiries was prepared by a preliminary survey on the subject, on the basis of which schedules of topics and specific questions were framed.

The preliminary survey of political organization enabled me to collect a considerable amount of information on that subject. Consequently, a later inquiry could aim primarily at checking and making more precise what was already known. To achieve this purpose a hundred-question schedule was devised. It was the object of each question that it should fulfil as adequately as possible the following conditions: to be neutral (formulated in such a way as not to suggest that the investigator preferred one answer rather than another), significant (likely to clarify obscure or controversial issues), concrete (such as 'Were there more or less people in group A than in group B?') rather than abstract (such as 'Give a definition of the administrative organization'), and simple (to be answered by 'yes', 'no', or one word). This last requirement was particularly important as it made possible a summing up of the answers. A translation of this questionnaire is given as Appendix One.

The choice of informants was made according to the following procedure. About a dozen persons, Africans and Europeans, who had been living for many years in Ruanda and had been in close contact with many members of the African community, were asked to give a list of Ruanda (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) who, in their opinion, would be familiar with the pre-European political structure, particularly from direct experience. The importance of listing people living in all the different regions of the country was stressed. By collating the various lists I finally obtained a set of about 350 names of men scattered everywhere in the country.

In order to interview them, I had to move between seventy-four different places which were about evenly distributed through the

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whole area of Ruanda. This took several months. With the help of two assistants, Messrs. G. Sebyeza and M. Sekanyambo, to whom I had given some training in interviewing and recording data, 326 informants were eventually interviewed. The aim of the inquiry was explained to them in small groups, but each interview was privately held to prevent informants from influencing each other's answers. In order to make sure that answers could be accurately recorded, the questionnaire had been printed and the answers of each informant were written on a separate copy.

As might have been expected, the more competent persons on political organization were Tutsi and in fact more than ninety per cent. of our informants were Tutsi. Since the number of Hutu and Twa was too small to be of any significance (there was, in fact, only one Twa!) their interviews were not taken into account in the computation of the results. A few more interviews were discarded on other grounds (such as suspicion about the sincerity or the mental ability of the informant). In the end the number of interviews used in the summing up was reduced to 300.

To count up the answers, some questions had to be modified. For instance, the question, 'Give the name of your patrilineage head', was replaced by, 'Do they know the name of their patrilineage head?' The computation of answers for the whole of Ruanda is given as Appendix Two.

Obviously, this class of 300 informants does not constitute a random sample representative of the total Ruanda population: the informants are practically all Tutsi and have been chosen according to certain criteria. This does not invalidate our procedure, however, as our aim was not to assess the opinions and knowledge of the whole of the Ruanda population on their past political organization, but to discover as accurately as possible what that organization was. This is why we attempted to interview only the most informed persons on the subject and to take into account the divergence of their views.

On kinship, family, and related subjects, the preliminary survey did not give as much information as the preliminary political survey revealed. Consequently, another procedure had to be adopted. A very comprehensive schedule of topics to be brought into the interview was elaborated. There were 542 items distributed under sixty-two headings to be covered with each

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informant. Sixteen Hutu and twenty Tutsi informants were interviewed. Two junior administrative officers, Messrs. E. Finoulst and G. De Clercq, who were taking a six-month course of training in anthropology, participated in the different stages of this inquiry, as did Mr. S. Naigisiki, who acted as assistant and interpreter.

The inquiry into the cosmological and ethical systems was carried out on similar lines. A schedule of thirty-five headings, under each of which several points were listed, was used in several collective and individual interviews.

This research from 1949 to 1951 forms the main basis for my *Système des relations sociales dans le Ruanda ancien*, published in 1954. But I have spent two other research periods in Ruanda (December 1952–December 1955 and September 1956–September 1957) on more specific topics. What was observed in these later periods, however, bearing on the topic of the earlier study, has been taken into account in the present volume.

Secondarily, the present study of Ruanda is based on literary sources published both before and after 1954. These are fully listed in the Bibliography.

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